

now say Congress can deal with the big issues our country faces. The majority of Americans also say Republicans are breaking down legislative gridlock and getting things done.

We are making history, and we all know why. In last November's election Republicans, and a lot of Democrats, too, heard what the American people wanted, and they offered a written Contract for America. Open Congress to public scrutiny, balance the Federal budget, the line-item veto for the President, a stronger national defense and removing unfunded mandates from the backs of local and State governments are just the beginning of the contract. It is real change, and it is starting to overcome America's cynicism about their government.

If anyone still needs proof that the Republican Party's Contract With America has given the American people hope, they need only look to the polls.

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE SHOULD NOT BE A PARTISAN ISSUE

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, Democrats finally have a defining issue, increasing the minimum wage, but it should not be a partisan issue. If Republicans want a cut in the capital gains tax for those most fortunate Americans, surely they can support a modest increase in the minimum wage for the average worker. We need to move Americans from the underclass to the middle class, and this is mainly a women's issue. Women are 60 percent of those receiving minimum wage, and many of these women are heads of households. They deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, the last election was about putting money in people's pockets, and what we are talking about is \$4.75 an hour the first year and \$5.25 the next year.

Let us stop the bellyaching about losing jobs, and let us do the right thing.

MOVING THE COUNTRY FORWARD WITH EACH CONTRACT PROMISE WE KEEP

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, what do 43 Governors have that President Clinton does not have? The answer: line-item veto.

By the end of the day Monday, President Reagan's birthday, this House will have approved a new power to help control Government spending that Democrats would not even give their own President.

With the line-item veto, Mr. Speaker, we cannot only cut wasteful spending,

but we can return some accountability to Congress, and, just as important, with each contract promise we keep, we not only move the country forward, but also help repair the bonds of trust between the people and their Representatives that has been so badly damaged over the last few decades. Politicians keeping promises will be greatly appreciated by the taxpayers of America.

IN SUPPORT OF A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

(Mr. MASCARA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to voice my strong support for the 90-cent increase in the minimum wage proposed by President Clinton.

As my colleagues know, I represent southwestern Pennsylvania, an area of the country that lost 200,000 jobs in the 1980's when the winds of change blew through the steel mills and the coal mines.

Many of my constituents are now left to subsist on \$4.25 per hour, or \$8,840 per year, hardly a living wage and no where near enough to raise a family.

The facts are that adjusted for inflation, the value of the minimum wage has fallen by nearly 50 cents since 1991 and is now 27 percent lower in buying power than it was in 1979.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 President Bush proposed, and many of my Republican colleagues supported, a similar minimum wage increase.

Now that we are about to undertake welfare reform, a minimum wage increase could be the first step in cutting welfare rolls and giving people a chance at a decent wage.

If we are going to be fair to our workers and help the economy to continue to grow, we should pass this modest minimum wage increase now.

American workers are crying out for us to help them.

□ 1040

PASSAGE OF LINE-ITEM VETO EXPECTED TO FALL ON EX-PRESIDENT REAGAN'S 84TH BIRTHDAY NEXT MONDAY

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, in his 1984 State of the Union Address President Ronald Reagan said, "As Governor, I found this line-item veto was a powerful tool against wasteful and extravagant spending. It works in 43 States. Let's put it to work in Washington for all the people."

Now, more than a decade later, President Reagan may get his wish. As Republicans continue to honor our Contract With America, we are finally close to the enactment of a line-item veto.

President Reagan communicated to us in ways that moved an entire nation. He painted pictures that emphasized our greatness, our heroes, and our hopes. His policies and his ideas were substantive, but he always had a knack for conveying a symbolism that helped Americans understand where he was taking us.

No one in this Chamber would ever try to compete with the style of President Reagan, but the symbolism of the vote on the line-item veto should not be lost. The House is scheduled to pass the line-item veto on Monday, February 6, Ronald Reagan's 84th birthday. We will deliver the Democrat President a budget-cutting device of surgical precision, a tool the Democrat Congress denied Ronald Reagan for 8 years.

MINIMUM WAGE RATE HIKE SEEN AS CRUCIAL TO WELFARE REFORM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I was proud to join President Clinton and my Democratic colleagues this morning in announcing our plan to raise the minimum wage from \$4.25 an hour to \$5.15 an hour. I am proud because I believe that raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do.

Consider this: A family of three with a full-time minimum wage worker lives below the poverty level in America. By raising the minimum wage by 90 cents over the next 2 years, we can lift that family above the poverty line. People who are working full-time at honest jobs should be able to support their families.

More importantly, raising the minimum wage is crucial to welfare reform. We cannot ask people to move from welfare to work unless we make work pay again.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we value work again in this country. More importantly, it is time we value our workers. People who work hard and play by the rules deserve to make a living wage. Let us raise the minimum wage.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO—A NEW TOOL TO FIGHT THE DEFICIT

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, every year someone invents a new term for the line-item veto. We have had enhanced rescission authority, we have had impoundment control, we have had expedited rescission, and other names too numerous to list. But while the names have changed, there is one factor that has remained the same. That is that the big spenders in Congress have always been opposed. That is because the big spenders know that the line-item veto by any name means less